

November 5, 2007

## **STATEWIDE CRIME STATISTICS RELEASED Drug Arrests Steady, DUI arrests up North Dakota Maintains “Safest State” Status**

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem today released North Dakota’s crime statistics for 2006. The report is compiled from information reported by local law enforcement agencies across the state.

The report showed that the total number of drug arrests has remained steady, but methamphetamine related drug arrests are down by almost 50%. “This is most likely in response to state and federal drug interdiction efforts and restrictions on sales of over-the-counter medications used to manufacture methamphetamine,” said Stenehjem.

Arrests for alcohol related offenses, however, are climbing, and accounted for 40% of total arrests in North Dakota last year. DUI arrests increased by 9.4 percent, from 5,923 in 2005 to 6,480 in 2006. DUI arrests increased across every legal drinking age group, with age 65 and older showing the highest increase at 31.6%, and arrests of age 21 increasing by almost 26%. In 2006, 1390 drivers were convicted of a second DUI, 372 of their third DUI and 119 drivers received an alarming fourth DUI conviction in seven years.<sup>1</sup>

“These are appalling statistics. Drinking and driving is a choice. We all know about choosing a designated driver, so there simply is no excuse for choosing to drive drunk,” said Stenehjem.

The state maintained its ranking as the safest state in the nation for violent crime per capita.<sup>2</sup> The “violent crime” category includes murder, rape, robbery and assault. “Although the number of violent crimes has increased by almost 31 percent over last year, violent crimes comprise just six percent of total index crimes reported,” said Stenehjem.

The total number of violent crimes reported was 786, an increase of 30.8 percent from the 601 violent crimes reported in 2005, and the largest increase since 2000. Approximately 22 percent of those arrested for violent crimes were juveniles.

There were eight murders in 2006, down from 14 in 2005. Four of the eight identified assailants were male. Of the eight murders, four involved domestic violence. Six victims were adults. Four adult victims died as a result of a knife wounds.

Property crimes accounted for 94 percent of the total index offenses reported in 2006. The number of property crimes increased 2.1 percent from the 2005 total of 11,963 to 12,214 in 2006. More than \$12 million dollars worth of property was reported stolen in 2006.

In 2006, 13,000 crime index offenses were reported by local law enforcement agencies, a 3.5 percent increase from 2005. The total number of arrests reported increased from 30,759 in 2005 to 32,360 in 2006. “Crime index” offenses include the violent crimes of murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and the property crimes of burglary, theft and motor vehicle theft. Juveniles accounted for approximately 21 percent of total arrests and 38.7 percent of crime index offense arrests.

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<sup>1</sup> ND Department of Transportation

<sup>2</sup> Morgan Quinto Press